

May 2005

DOH PUB. #331-197

Sanitary Surveys of Drinking Water Systems

State regulations require periodic sanitary survey inspections

Sanitary surveys are periodic inspections of water system facilities, operations and record keeping. The inspections identify conditions that may present a sanitary or public health risk.

Washington state regulations (WAC 246-290-416) call for a routine sanitary survey of all Group A public drinking water systems once every five years, except for community surface water systems, which are to be surveyed once every three years.

Sanitary surveys are conducted either by Department of Health (DOH) staff or a DOH designee called a Third Party Qualified Sanitary Surveyor. While some Qualified Sanitary Surveyors are local health jurisdiction employees, others are independent contractors.

After you receive word that a sanitary survey is required, the surveyor will contact you to make arrangements for conducting the survey. The surveyor will try to meet your scheduling needs. Therefore, water systems that do not schedule a survey will receive another notice with a required time frame for obtaining an inspection. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in increased monthly coliform monitoring up to five samples per month, a red operating permit, state significant non-complier status, and possible civil penalties.

After the survey is done, the surveyor will give you a completed survey checklist and a summary report with findings. Please read the report carefully, as it describes any observed deficiencies found during the inspection. It is your responsibility to correct these deficiencies promptly. A copy of the survey results will also go to the appropriate DOH regional office for review. DOH will notify you in writing if any additional follow-up action is required.

Minimum components of all routine sanitary surveys:

- Planning and management documents (small water system management program guide, operating and maintenance records, water quality monitoring records, coliform monitoring plan, water supply security measures, and so on).
- Distribution system and status of cross connection control program.
- Source and sanitary control area.
- Source pumps and pumping facilities.
- Source treatment procedures and equipment.
- Pressure tanks.
- Finished water storage.
- Operator certification status.



The sanitary survey inspection process

1. DOH or a Qualified Sanitary Surveyor informs you when you need to have a sanitary survey.
2. You and the surveyor agree on a survey date.
3. You arrange for system personnel to be available on the survey date so they can share system records and show the surveyor around the water system.
4. You prepare for the inspection by gathering, reviewing, and organizing records (Water Facility Inventories, water quality results, maintenance records and so on) so you can share them with the surveyor.
5. System personnel meet with the surveyor, discuss records, and show him or her around the system (tour of the system facilities, pump house, storage, booster pumps, treatment unit and so on).
6. The surveyor sends you a follow-up letter regarding the survey results. A copy of the results also goes to the appropriate DOH regional office for review.
7. DOH notifies you in writing if any additional follow-up action is required, and sends a bill for the survey (if not already paid as part of a local health jurisdiction survey application).
8. You complete any necessary corrections identified in the survey report and DOH follow-up letter and then notify DOH in writing when the corrections are completed or to ask for an extension to complete the work.
9. DOH tracks any critical deficiencies of high public health risk until they are corrected. The water system is expected to complete all corrections identified by the next survey cycle.
10. You keep a copy of the survey results and DOH letter for your records.

Fees

Sanitary survey fees are collected either by your local health jurisdiction or DOH. If DOH collects the fee, you will get a bill with your final inspection report. If the local health jurisdiction collects the fee, it is payable either when they schedule a survey or when you get your final inspection report.

Resources

To help you prepare for your sanitary survey, DOH developed the publication, *Preparing for a Sanitary Survey: Information to Help Small Water Systems* (DOH PUB #331-238). This publication is online at <http://www4.doh.wa.gov/dw/publications/publications.cfm> or by calling the nearest DOH regional office:

Sara Brallier, Field Activities Program Coordinator – (360) 236-3180

Northwest Region – (253) 395-6750

Southwest Region – (360) 664-0768

Eastern Region – (509) 456-3115

